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4. We within this Agency should certainly do more than we have done in Vietnamese language training. This is a problem the Vietnamese Affairs Staff is already looking into. Our training programs, however, should be tailored to practical needs rather than theoretical desirability. The officer slated for a professional field assignment should be given an exposure to the language and enough familiarity with its basic structure and vocabulary so that when he is immersed in a Vietnamese-speaking environment he can pick the language up quickly on his own. Most of us who have served in Vietnam have acquired some smattering of skill by the simple process of osmosis and exposure. What is needed is prior training which will provide the framework that will make this osmosis process more efficient. I am advised by my colleagues in OTR that this type of foundation laying can be accomplished in a fairly short space of intensive instruction (e.g., three to four weeks).

5. The person who is to work with Vietnamese documents requires a longer course to give him the tools he needs, but even here you can bring him to a point in pre-assignment training where he will be able to further his learning efficiently once in Vietnam without trying to make a linguist of him prior to his departure.

6. As we are all aware, the drastic expansion in the size of the Saigon Station over the past 18 months has produced a number of unfortunate but probably inevitable administrative errors. Officers have been snatched from assignments elsewhere and dispatched with great haste to Vietnam, only to find upon their arrival that they had no immediate task and that the Station was not really expecting them quite so soon. Though one could not prove it statistically, I doubt if there are many cases where a three to four week delay in an officer's arrival in Vietnam would really hurt the Station, particularly if that officer arrived with a suitable grounding in linguistic skills which would make him much more effective the moment he steps off the airplane in Saigon.

7. I recommend that in conjunction with FE Division and OTR we take a fresh, serious look at the language problem and see if we can devise some effective exposure/familiarization course of relatively short duration through which most officers designated for Saigon could be run prior to their departure.

George A. Carver, Jr.
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

1 - C/FE/
1 - Station Organization
1 - SAVA Chron
1 - GAC *Chund*

Distribution
Orig - Addressee

9 SEP 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
 SUBJECT : Vietnamese Language Training

1. This memorandum is for information. It responds to your request (accompanying the attached note from Sherman Kent) to "find out how many U. S. Government employees have been and are being taught Vietnamese."

2. The data needed for a complete response to your request are not available. But we have obtained reports on the numbers of individuals who have received instruction in Vietnamese through the Foreign Service Institute, the Defense Language Institute, and the CIA Language School, which, as far as we can determine, have the only Government facilities engaged in such training. Attachment B summarizes these reports. Missing is information on the relatively few Government employees who have attended Berlitz or other non-Government language schools and those who have acquired a knowledge of Vietnamese while serving in South Vietnam.

3. As Attachment B reflects, very little Vietnamese language training took place within the Government prior to 1 July 1962 when the military services began a concerted effort in this respect. The build-up has continued since that date, and plans for FY 1967 reflect still further increases, with the Defense Language Institute, for example, projecting an enrollment of 3631. However, the preponderance of this instruction has been and still is pitched at the lower proficiency levels, serving primarily for orientation purposes.

4. To reach the "Elementary" proficiency level in spoken Vietnamese (which linguists consider a language of "medium" difficulty--comparable to, say, Russian or Persian), most students need about three months of full-time instruction. About six months are needed for the "Intermediate" level. Thus far, only about 1000 individuals have completed enough instruction to reach the "Intermediate" level and another 215 are currently enrolled in courses designed for this purpose.

STAT 5. The relatively small numbers of Government personnel trained in Vietnamese cannot be attributed to a shortage of facilities, apparently, since the growth of facilities--certainly at the Foreign Service Institute and the CIA Language School--have consistently kept pace with or out-stripped enrollments.

6. You may be aware that Ambassador Leonard A. Unger has expressed concern over the small number of Government employees who can speak Vietnamese. Last May he wrote the Chief, FE Division, suggesting the formation of an inter-agency task force, which Unger would head, to stimulate additional training in this area. Two CIA officers, one from FE and one from OTR, were named to the task force but as yet it has not been activated.

[Redacted]
K. L. Bannerman
Deputy Director
for Support

2 Atts:

Att A: Memo dtd 7 Jul 66 to DCI fr Sherman
Kent, subj: "Vietnamese Linguists"

Att B: "Vietnamese Language Training in
U. S. Government Facilities"

100-36-3519

7 July 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Vietnamese Linguists

1. What follows is not primarily Agency business. It is national business. And probably the one officer of government to do something about it is the President of the United States.
2. How many trustworthy, competent, and well-educated American citizens of the appropriate age group to serve in Vietnam possess a fluency in the spoken and written Vietnamese language? Without having made anything remotely akin to a systematic census, my guess is that there are appallingly few.
3. My concern in this matter has been triggered entirely by intelligence considerations. To wit: the US does not begin to have enough Vietnamese linguists in the field to exploit captured documents or interrogate POWs, deserters, chieu hoi folks, etc. The greater part of the information available to the analytical arms of US intelligence from these two sources is that which has been produced in the first instance by Vietnamese nationals. The reasons why this is a highly unsatisfactory way to proceed are numerous and obvious.

4. Whatever the claims of intelligence for Vietnamese linguists, they must be far surpassed by the claims of the American military authorities, the political and economic officers of Embassy Saigon, the AID people, USIA, etc. It is sobering indeed to realize how many of our war-time troubles may be simply a function of blurred communication.

5. Suppose the present active military phase of the war changes in the right direction, suppose even that it comes to an end within the next year and a half, or two years. The US presence required in Vietnam will probably have to be very substantial for a far longer period -- who knows, five, ten, or fifteen years or more.

6. Somebody ought to do something now and as I suggest above, that somebody will probably have to be the President. The something should proceed somewhat as follows. First, a very quick canvass of the number of American citizens willing and able to serve in Vietnam who right now possess a proficiency in the language. Two, some rough and ready estimates from the field as to how many linguists are required for a more efficient operation of the multi-faceted US program in Vietnam. Three, the laying on of as many language training programs as are required. Surely the US effort should be

commensurate to that which was made with respect to the
training of Japanese linguists in World War II.



SHERMAN KENT

STAT

VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE TRAINING IN

U. S. GOVERNMENT FACILITIES

The following statistics are based on information obtained from the Foreign Service Institute, the Defense Language Institute, and the CIA Language School, and represent--so far as can be determined--the total effort of these facilities in recent years in providing Vietnamese language training. All figures reflect full-time training and were current as of 30 June 1966. With minor exceptions as noted, all training has taken place since 1 July 1962.

FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE

<u>Type Course</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Graduated</u>		<u>Currently Enrolled</u>	
		<u>State</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Other</u>
Regular (civilian only)	8-12 weeks	0	40-50	0	0
Regular (civilian only)	20-48 weeks	34*	42	2	21

*five trained prior to 1961

Number Trained Including
Those Enrolled 30 June '66

Special (military only)	20 weeks	100
Special (military only)	48 weeks	220

DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

The Presidio at Monterey, California

<u>Type Course</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Number Graduated</u>	<u>Currently Enrolled</u>
Special	5 weeks	39	0
Special	8 weeks	315	34
Special	12 weeks	1,387	232
Oral Comprehension	37 weeks	117	113
Basic	47 weeks	605	68

NOTE: Above totals include an estimated 10 civilians; remainder are all military personnel.

The Special Warfare Center at Ft. Bragg, N. C.

<u>Type Course</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Number Trained</u>
Special	120 hours	FY '64 1,915
		FY '65 1,976
		FY '66 2,695

NOTE: Above instruction given in 5 or 6 weeks to officers and EM, 75% of whom reach an S-1 ("Slight") level of proficiency.

CIA LANGUAGE SCHOOL

<u>Type Course</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Number Trained</u>
External Program	10-20 weeks	16 (all prior to May 1963)
Basic Familiarization	6 weeks	32
Reading	11 weeks	2
Reading	20 weeks	1

NOTE: On 1 September 1966 the following were enrolled in full-time CIA courses: 11 students in 6 weeks course, and 11 in 26 weeks course.